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# ANGLO-AMERICAN FAITH

BY WILLIAM McCLELLAN

THE peace of the future depends upon the concerted action of Britain and America. This is the most significant lesson in the world politics taught by the war. Whatever league of nations or other instrument may be devised, the English-speaking peoples, when acting in unity, will strike the note of authority. As the next war would be infinitely more devastating and horrible than the last, keeping the peace becomes more than ever the duty of civilized man. It follows easily that if peace can be assured by the coördination of Britain and America, it is of paramount importance that heed be given to the necessary conditions.

That was almost an exhilarating moment in 1914 when the world learned that Britain would throw all her resources into the struggle for civilization. Germany had expected it when she invaded Belgium, even though she seemed surprised. It was overwhelming to Germany in 1917 when the United States finally recognized her own responsibility to humanity. At that moment, it is known now, Germany secretly admitted defeat.

The change in the mode of war has given Britain and America their position of dominance, or better said,—leadership. War is no longer a matter only of individual valor or military genius. It is a titanic struggle of organized human and natural resources. From the moment that the struggle commences, every man, woman, and child on both sides, whether at home or with the colors, makes war. All natural, industrial, and commercial resources are taken from ordinary uses and reshaped for most effective war purposes. No discussion is needed to prove that those countries having a huge wealth of mineral and agricultural resources, and which have built up their manufacturing and transportation facilities to make these resources available, will be dominant in international affairs. Great Britain and America

are in precisely this position, and whether it be due to accident or superior genius is insignificant. Moreover, the primacy will prevail in any international organization which may be functioning.

Every honest-minded person must desire some effective association of the nations. But the builders of the existing league attempted the impossible. They essayed to invent a full-grown league when there was not an international mind among the nations; when each nation, large or small, had a most exaggerated national mind; when two of the largest nations could not be present at the organization; when the peoples of the world were war weary to exhaustion, and were interested only in a quick peace; and when the mind of the world was far from exultant and generous as was the mind of the American colonies after gaining independence. A league of nations will never be a direct creation. It will be a growth from a very simple beginning. It must start as a consultative assembly only, for no great nation will ever surrender sovereignty in cold blood. A league of nations—say what you will—is the beginning of an international State, which somehow will accumulate sovereignty. Such a State could never be formed at the close of a great war. Even the American Colonies with a common speech and a common political background could not do it until after a period of experimenting and waiting for passions to subside. The Colonies had to possess themselves of national minds, which incidentally was not completed until 1865. No such international superstate is above the horizon now. Even if one were, it would be a decade or two before it could depend on its own strength. With or without it, when Britain and America were agreed in any crisis, a demonstration of force could be made which would effectively control explosive action anywhere in the world.

To have Britain and America on the same side of every international issue is, then, the *sine qua non* for world peace. The serious problem is to discover how circumstances may be arranged so that they can be expected to be there. There is certainly no reason to expect that they will inevitably find themselves in coördination. At numerous times during the last forty years, feeling between them was tense, and war was possible if not

immanent. To-day there are numerous prophets of varying position who think the two great English-speaking nations must clash, sooner or later. I respect the thinking of no person who believes such a war impossible. Such an assumption does not square with the facts, and is an easy road to trouble. Even though with difficulty, they could fight like any other two peoples, if the causes of war should arise at any time.

The only possible cause of war between Britain and America would be lack of faith of one in the other. Neither one lacks territory, nor covets any particular territory which the other has. Both have remarkably attractive and ample "places in the sun." Both are powerful, with extraordinary resources, and have a wholesome respect for each other. For these reasons, if war came, as someone has said recently, "We should drift into war with Great Britain after weeks or months of exchanges, doubts, delays." Conceivably a single overt act might start a conflict, but not until a policy, steadily pursued for a relatively long time, had undermined the faith of one in the other. The ulterior purpose would have to be proved—be apparent—before these two giants would resort to trial by combat. To prevent war between themselves, and thereby hold the proud position of forever keeping peace on earth, both must keep the faith.

Both nations will be wise to look the facts in the face and recognize that they are natural antagonists. In the first place they are the only two nations at present which, because of wealth and organization, could challenge each other with any uncertainty as to the result. If insane enough, we have the resources and ability to equal or exceed the British Navy, which would be a challenge indeed. Granting that we could come to one national mind as to method, we could certainly compete with Britain for a mercantile marine. New York is the only city in the world which could replace London as the financial centre. The war between the sterling and dollar exchanges is on, with some visible success for the dollar. Then there are the numerous financial and commercial relations, entangling and otherwise, with undeveloped countries. Great Britain or her nationals have had these things, have dominated these and other fields of commercial and political activity. To give them up would be to lose tremendous prestige,

in fact, would be to lose empire to a great degree. America, or a large part of it, would not be averse to at least sharing the throne. Indeed, there has been a large volume of printed and spoken discussion about wresting this or that portion of leadership from Britain. There are any number of Americans who think their country could defeat any other in war, commerce, or other contest, and who resent holding less than the first place. They have no conception of the dogged quiet, but far from passive resistance of that nation who knows what leadership means, knows how to get it, and how to hold it. These are the facts, and in the face of them it is fatuous to ridicule the idea of war. It is the acme of ineptitude to think that blood, language, institutions, or origins, will alone suffice to remove friction and heat. These are more or less powerful instruments for the wise use of those who perceive the intense and vigorous rivalry that is on its way between the two English-speaking giants. There is evidence even now of the real situation. Until 1914 Great Britain was the arbitrator in Europe. Of Europe, but detached, she maintained this position for more than a century. She was stronger at the end of every European war than at the beginning. To the superficial observer she still seems to speak softly, but with authority, as of old. France, Italy, Germany, Poland, and all the rest struggle in negotiation, but they wait for the casting vote of Lloyd George. The careful observer notes, however, that there are few permanent settlements. He notices, in every case, side glances toward America. He records the frequent assertion that there can be no league without America. He perceives a general distrust by small nations of the big ones, including Britain, and a universal hope that America will step in, accept mandates, lend money—in other words, accept leadership. If America were willing, and had faith in her ability, she could now take the position in Europe that Britain held at the end of the Napoleonic wars.

The thoughtful Britishers are not confused. To them America is not the first, but the most formidable and resourceful rival which they have had to meet. They speak outright, as did *Fairplay*, when discussing our mercantile marine. Speaking for the shipping interests of Britain it announced frankly and cheerily:

When it has been a question of the survival of the fittest we have invariably done our level best to crush or mold opposition, and as regards America's new mercantile marine, we shall go on doing it and expect her to do the same by us.

The task of statesmen is to make sure that this intense rivalry progresses with that remarkable sportsmanship that both nations have shown in other fields. First of all is the necessity for a clear understanding of the nature of the contest. So many of the jingo nationals of both nations talk as if it were a "fight to a finish" with no rules. Britain or America must be eventually "knocked out." If this attitude were to become general it would be a fatality. I suspect at times that the fear of this pervades the minds of those who are most noisily advocating some form of rapprochement. If we must have a simile, the dual meet is more like a distance race. From time to time each contestant has his turn at setting the pace. They run with different form perhaps,—one may excel in stride, the other in coördination. We are not interested in the finish, for this is too far off for speculation; but we are supremely interested in the way the contest progresses, and under what conditions it is started and managed.

There must be no formal alliance for mutual support between Britain and America. First, because both nations would chafe under it. A huge amount of time and energy would be required to administer it. More important, it would be objectionable because it would erect a more or less embarrassing barrier between us and all other nations. Moreover, a formal alliance is unnecessary. Better results can be obtained by each nation independently deciding that sympathetic coöperation and understanding is the best policy from a purely selfish standpoint, and then governing their actions accordingly. Two important public questions now under discussion,—the British Navy and the Panama Canal,—illustrate the point. In these, both nations have an opportunity to demonstrate a clear understanding and good faith.

Is Great Britain at present justified in refusing naval disarmament below a figure which would give her command of the sea? I think she is. First let us gain a clear understanding by comparing the positions of Britain and America. America is continental (virtually so), self-contained, almost undivided territorially, whereas the British Empire is insular, colonial or

provincial,—territorially divided. Great Britain is the heart of the empire. The British navy, in which a huge portion of the mercantile marine must be included, is the connecting chain between the parts. In no fanciful sense, the merchants ships are the highways between the parts. As well ask America to give up her transcontinental railroads as ask Britain to give up her combined transporting and guarding navy. It may set an unpleasant problem for all the rest, that one nation finds itself in a position where it must, beyond any question, command the sea; but there Britain is. Incidentally, for the territory represented, hers is not larger than any other navy. The difficulty is that it is under one command. Not a small part of it provides the “steel walls,” formerly the “wooden walls,” of the two islands. Neither America nor any other nation has a reasonable right to demand that this navy be rendered impotent for its primary purpose of making the British Empire possible. The day will come when the British mind can be at ease without the fighting part of it, and then that purpose be given up. Is the British navy a menace to us? That is the vital question now. Must we take up a programme of navy building which, *ipso facto*, means that we are afraid of war with Great Britain? Can Britain do anything to improve the situation?

Great Britain has for a century shown a wholesome respect—not in any sense fear—for America’s naval ability. Where prepared strength was not available, “Yankee smartness” has helped out. In war, necessity is the mother of invention. To-day, if we can have no faith in the character of Britain, it would be folly to depend on anything but a great navy. Granting a reasonable faith, there are some very important material factors. Britain is three thousand miles from our shores, and could detach only a portion of her navy to attack us. True, if we ever have a large mercantile marine, we shall find a great difficulty facing us, but I believe international law will render this risk less onerous. Resolute action at international conferences will take care of all merchant ships, unless they become belligerent. Moreover, Britain or any other nation with a great preponderant army or navy is constantly suspected and subject to attack by all when she shows a disposition to be grasping. Such a nation invariably

has a number of weak situations internationally, and could never afford to become selfishly aggressive. Her navy, large in the aggregate, must be subdivided to cover a large number of strategic points. For America, particularly, the most potent factor is the group of independent constituents which really control the Empire and its actions. Merely to mention Canada, Australia and her neighbors, South Africa, Ireland, Scotland, and—in a growing sense—Egypt and India, is to realize that aggressive action by the Empire would be well-nigh impossible except in a righteous cause. As has been pointed out, the British Empire, in determining its action, must consult a very large number of almost national relations within the Empire, and experience has shown that these may be very divergent. I think, therefore, as a practical matter that America can solve her naval programme without consideration of Britain as a menace. A navy strong enough for any other emergency will be ample for all purposes. Naturally, any extended mercantile marine would be subject to partial destruction, but for America this would be a financial, not a vital, matter. The question immediately presents itself as to what Britain could do to increase the confidence of America so that such a decision could be made and not only all rivalry removed, but also an unwritten alliance be created.

She could dismantle completely all her military and naval stations in this hemisphere and neutralize forever all ports in her possessions, colonies, and provinces here. Such neutral ports, of course, could never be attacked by the United States, and an attack on these neutral ports by any other nation would be resented by us. Such an action would in the first place weaken to a great degree any navy which Britain could send against us. Her nearest naval base would be three thousand miles distant. It would render whatever navy we had relatively stronger by reason of our own near by resources. On the other hand, Britain would have nothing to protect in this hemisphere. Should the seemingly impossible war come between Britain and us, Canada, with such neutralized ports, would be in no different position. In such a war her relation and effectiveness would depend upon her own military resources as measured with what we could send against her. Some will contend that the existence of these naval



bases is no disadvantage to us, as we should capture or destroy them at the outset. This, however, is tantamount to saying that they would be of no use to Great Britain in war, that she has no plans for defending and using them, and that we could safely divide up our navy to attack them, and at the same time protect our own ports and coast cities. There are many assumptions here, not necessarily advantageous to us. How Canada would regard this neutralization of ports is another serious question, for it is well known that the opinion of Canada would prevail irrespective of the Imperial Government. It would seem that she could accept it. As a nation she would be in no sense neutral.

In the Panama Canal, America has her opportunity to induce faith. It ought to be internationalized, without any discrimination whatever in favor of any nation, including ourselves. I am one of those who believe that the clear language of the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty requires this, especially when remembering that it is a substitution for the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. But there is no need for argument, for its neutralization is urged here as a matter of policy irrespective of any real or fancied rights. While this neutralization would apply to all nations, it would be chiefly effective as to Great Britain because of her extensive mercantile marine. It would be an act of faith of far-reaching importance, in that it would be an earnest of our fair and sportsman-like thinking and acting in the future. Again it may be stressed that Great Britain and America are natural rivals in commerce and shipping, but neither nation can afford to take any advantage over the other, based on strained interpretations of treaties or agreements.

I sometimes think it would increase Anglo-American comity if the British Empire should adopt the decimal money system. Canada already has it. To say the least, it would be an exceedingly graceful action. The coins and notes should be of precisely the same content and value, though of different designs. There would be a distinct loss in having one design, in that the masses would not have the constant symbolism of two sovereign nations faithful each to each, with intimate relations. Obviously there would be a very great gain in practical efficiency in commercial transactions from such interchangeable specie, but it is not pro-

posed for this reason primarily. Our effort is to bring the minds of the common man and woman of Britain and America to a real unity. Imagine what a direct and effective help the intercircularity of coins and notes would be,—those of either nation equally valuable to the holder.

We have been constructing an alliance, but, written or unwritten, it must not arouse antagonism among the other nations. Self-interest makes strange bed-fellows, and should Continental Europe, including Russia, become violently suspicious, we might have a powerful entente against our alliance. The greatest problem the nations have to solve is Germany—seventy million trained and organized producers and consumers. There isn't force enough in the world to keep such a population in subjection. Their numbers will multiply and their industrial and commercial power will increase. Needless to say they mean to have—must have—their place in the sun. We ought to be far enough away from the passions of the war to look facts squarely in the face, even if we cannot forget or forgive. How long will the insanity of separating German-Austria from Germany continue? Hardly less intricate and important is the solution of the middle east of Germany and Italy. And there is, further, that very dangerous and complicated Asiatic tangle. There will be wars here and there, and rumors of war everywhere, but happiness or war for us will depend entirely upon whether the leadership of Britain and America is acceptable to the other nations. Our every action will be scrutinized for sincerity of purpose and fairness of dealing.

The most serious obstacle to confidence and leadership is the evident fear by many peoples of a British and American lust for Empire. America has probably removed to a large extent this feeling in Latin America, the only place where it ever existed. Britain, however, has fanned the flames everywhere by her additions through the peace treaty. To speak frankly, these very large additions of territory have operated unfavorably for Britain in the mind of the average American. Many careful thinkers, including a vast number of Britishers, look on the additions as added burdens which really weaken the Empire, but the popular mind cannot arrive at that point of view. Apparently the British flag, already flying over a huge portion of the earth, is being carried on

a wave of empire further and further, provoking jealousy, resentment, and suspicion. There is a generally held opinion that once in the British Empire, a unit must fight for its freedom as did America, South Africa, and now Ireland, with Egypt and India on the way. Britain's most serious problem will be to change the point of view of the American man on the street. The arrangement for extra votes in the League of Nations merely confirmed his prejudice. The Irish question stresses it still further. There can be no complete faith between Britain and America until Ireland is at peace in the Empire. Such problems are not local or internal,—they are primary tests of national character. To reduce antagonism and disarm suspicion is the great task of British statesmen. The menace of a Napoleon aiming for empire was serious, but for a great democracy to be suspected of that ambition would be fearful. Britain must avoid even the "appearance of evil." Her diplomacy must be as open as that of America. In short, if Britain and America are to lead effectively, they must demonstrate to the world that in every case they are capable of thinking internationally. They must develop that unknown faculty—an international mind.

Supported by an undoubting faith in the motives and purposes of each other, the two great English-speaking nations not only could not war with each other, but also could march together in the approach to every international problem. Jointly they would be the arbiter of nations. Sympathetic and scrupulous toward each other, they would gain the confidence and faith of the others. In any conclave of the nations their independent actions would be completely harmonious, and the moral force created would settle differences so that they would become details or disappear altogether. A long time might be necessary, and the progress might be slow and jerky. Perhaps the end is far off, but there can be no finish unless there is a start. If the world is to become really safe for democracy, an unwritten entente between Britain and America is the only conceivable first step, with both nations recognizing faith in each other as their most precious possession.

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